



**EU General Statement**  
**19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties**  
**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**  
**The Hague, 15 November 2021**

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\* and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, allow me to commend you, Ambassador Gabrielse and your team, for your skilful leadership in the run up to the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, which remains an extremely difficult task in the current global pandemic context. We highly appreciate that the Netherlands' Presidency has made all necessary arrangements for this meeting to take place in an inclusive way and to provide a good platform to take stock of the progress of the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan and pave the way forward. You can count on our full support for your Presidency and your listed priorities: namely capacity building, innovation and inclusivity.

The EU welcomes the significant progress made in the fight against the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and is aware of the tremendous humanitarian and development challenges still posed by them.

In terms of capacity building we agree that the national authorities should be equipped to take ownership of their national mine action programmes in order to safeguard their people from the threat of mines including mines of an improvised nature and to assist mine survivors in an inclusive and gender-sensitive manner. We are also of the view that innovative ideas need to be introduced in mine risk reduction and education programmes, for example, new digital technologies can be used for mine risk reduction purposes. Regarding inclusivity, for the EU this means not only focusing on purely physical assistance, but also ensuring that psychological effects of mine accidents are properly addressed through providing adequate mental health support.

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\* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

The Ottawa Convention, as reaffirmed by the 164 States Parties at the Fourth Review Conference in 2019 in Oslo, embodies the global norm against anti-personnel mines, a norm that has saved thousands of lives and spared countless children, who constitute the majority of mine victims. We appeal to all actors to refrain from the production, acquisition, stockpiling, trade, retention or transfer of anti-personnel mines and strongly condemn their use anywhere, anytime, and by any actor, whether by States or non-State actors.

For the European Union, as a strong proponent of multilateralism, the universalization and implementation of the Ottawa Convention remains one of its main priorities in the area of human security and disarmament, achieved through the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan. We consider the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to be a key disarmament instrument and a success story of effective multilateralism and diplomacy. Its integrity, full implementation and strict application must be guaranteed and universal adherence pursued.

The EU calls upon the 33 countries which are not States Parties to accede to the AP Mine Ban Convention and invites them to make concrete steps towards accession, including by immediately putting in place a moratorium on the use, stockpile, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. Nothing should prevent them from ensuring the implementation of the Convention, even before accession, including by addressing mined areas, providing mine risk education and reduction efforts, providing assistance to victims and by destroying stockpiled mines.

We continue to work towards the achievement of the Convention's ultimate goal of a world without anti-personnel mines, whether industrially manufactured, or of an improvised nature. Thus, we encourage all States Parties to intensify their efforts to complete their time-bound obligations as soon as possible, and to the fullest extent possible by 2025.

The EU congratulates Sri Lanka for having fully complied with its obligations under Article 4 after having completed the destruction of its landmine stockpile. We encourage the remaining States Parties with obligations under Article 4 to complete the destruction of their stockpiles as soon as possible.

The EU assistance covers the full scope of mine action: land release, stockpile destruction, victim assistance, risk education, advocacy, capacity building and research and development for mine detection and clearance technology and equipment. The total assistance provided by the EU and the EU Member States in the past 5 years amounts to more than 800 million EUR. However, persistent challenges remain, notably the increasing use of anti-personnel mines of improvised nature. According to the 2021 edition of the Landmine Monitor, in Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Myanmar, Nigeria and Pakistan anti-personnel mines of improvised nature are being deployed by non-State armed groups. We continue to condemn these actions. We are pleased to note that Nigeria duly reported on the implementation impediments posed by mines of an improvised nature in the framework of the Ottawa Convention.

The EU considers that it is important to continue raising awareness of the obligations of States Parties to address this type of contamination within the framework of the Convention and to report the use of anti-personnel mines of improvised nature.

The EU is also committed to mainstreaming a gender perspective into its mine action work and we continue to support the work of stakeholders in mine action to integrate gender perspective and take diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into their humanitarian mine action policies.

Thank you, Mr. President